

FIVE MINUTES
A D V I C E
TO
PRAYERLESS PERSONS
AND
FAMILIES.

BY
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Thou castest off Fear, and restrainest Prayer before God. Job xv. 4.

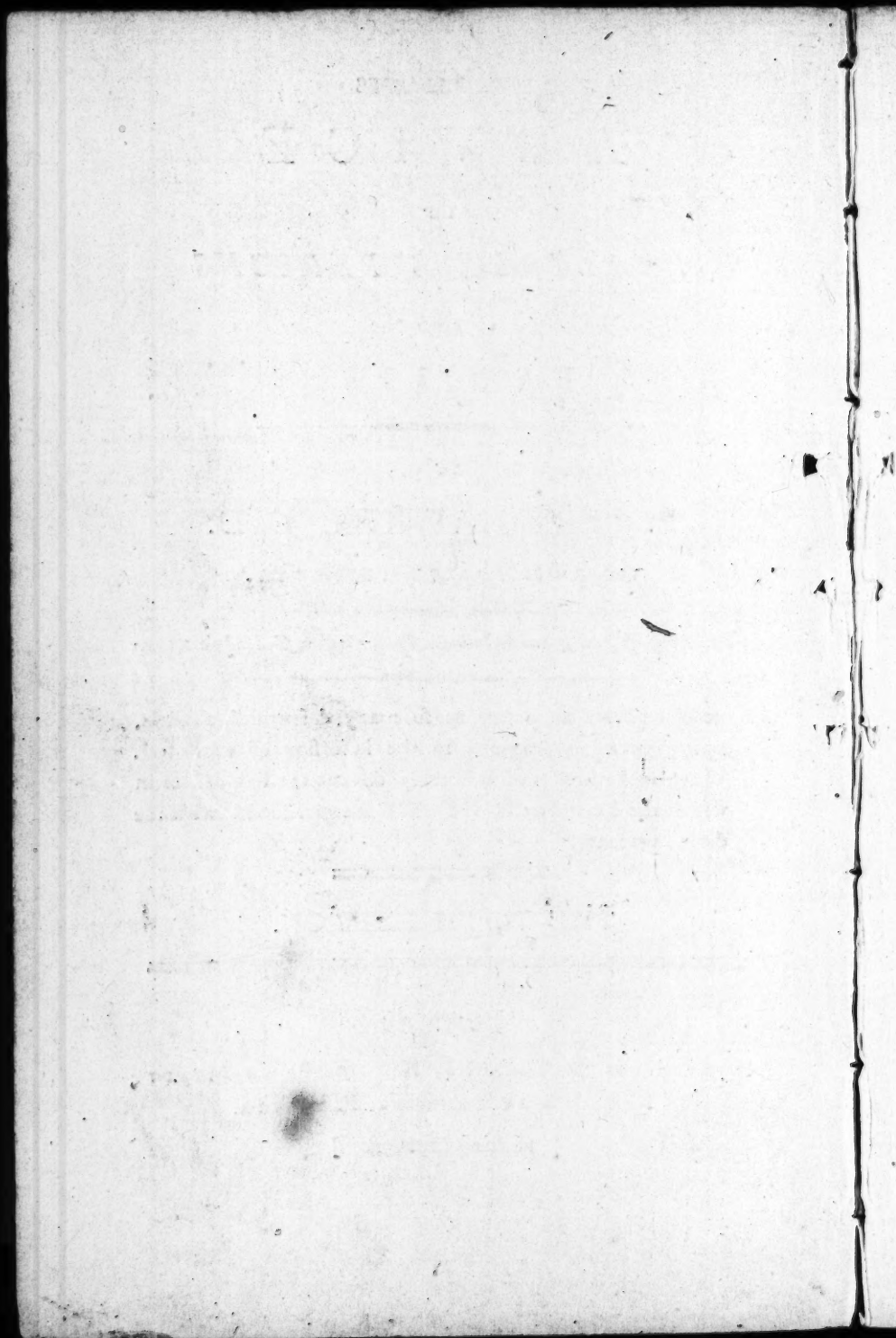
I consider prayerless hearts as so many defenceless citadels, laying open and exposed to the incursion of every foe. Whereas the houses of the truly devout are like castles in which the Lord dwells, and which are garrisoned with the divine presence.

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FIVE MINUTES ADVICE,

Ec. Ec.

THE great and pressing claims of prayer, considered as a means of grace, are so fully allowed by every one of common sense and common reason to be positive and indispensable, that there can be but one character upon earth who will presume to question or deny them. He, and he only will do it, who hath thrown off all sense of religion, and hath dared to say with his mouth what hitherto the *fool* hath only ventured to suggest in his heart, that *there is no God*.

It is not therefore to confirm the positiveness of the duty; neither is it to give conviction of what no reasonable man can want to be convinced of, for which these Five Minutes Advice are offered; but it is to warn those who profess in words to *believe*, but neglect to carry it into *practice*, that something more is necessary than the mere consent of the understanding in the great demands of religion.

Among many apparently well-disposed persons, there are not a few who are but like Agrippa, *almost* Christians. And among others, the numbers are perhaps as numerous, who, like Nicodemus, though they own Christ in their hearts, are afraid to profess him openly. Would to God the *former* would seriously consider the extreme folly of halting between two opinions; and that the *latter* would frequently place before him those awful sentences pronounced by the blessed Author of our religion on this culpable timidity: *He that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

An awakened sense of the infinite importance of the great duty of prayer; an increasing apprehension of the danger of living without it; a serious concern for the souls of all such unthinking characters; and an earnest desire of contributing, though in the smallest degree, as an instrument in the divine hand, to stir up the minds of men to a proper regard to
it;

it; these are the causes which have prompted the author of this little work to try somewhat out of the common way, in order to awaken, if possible, a spirit of piety in the land: And may he who alone can give energy to what is said bless the labours to the end intended!

The writer presumes, that *five minutes* advice, on so important a subject, cannot be considered tedious by any one. And he presumes also, that the most busy life will not complain much of the impertinence of so short an interruption. And, if he were to add any thing further to these considerations, by way of gaining the indulgence of a favourable hearing, he would say, moreover, that as the object in view, in giving the advice here offered, does not proceed from the least interested views in the writer, he should suppose there would need no stronger reasons to persuade the reader to regard it.

My Brother! consider well these arguments before thou refusest the advice here offered thee, and do not turn from it with a fastidious indifference and disregard. Alas! if the world could but see the thick film of prejudices with which

the eye of the understanding in a state of nature is darkened, how gladly would it accept of any help which might but place in the way of its removal.

The *almost* Christians, like *Agrippa*, which were just now mentioned, and the half believers, like *Nicodemus*, both need nothing more than the frequent recollection of the unpardonable duplicity of an unsettled and wavering conduct; and of the encreased condemnation which must finally fall on all such on the great day of account.—Reader! art thou ashamed of prayer? ashamed of that which is the distinguishing character of man, and the noblest privilege with which he is furnished? Anticipate, I beseech thee, that hour when the shame will be on the opposite side of the question; when it will be not the shame of man; of a poor fleeting creature of a day like thyself; but the shame of an offended God, an injured Redeemer, and in the presence of the whole world of congregated beings, at the judgement-seat of Christ!

But while the author of this little work looks up to God with an eye of humble supplication, that his grace may bless these considerations to both these sorts of
prayerless

prayerless persons, he cannot but more earnestly implore the divine goodness that they may affect *prayerless families*.

It is to rouse inconsiderate, unnatural, and thoughtless fathers, parents, and masters, for which these hints are given. It is to convince them of their iniquity and their danger. For to their shameful neglect of this necessary duty, must in a great measure be ascribed the prevalence of profaneness and impiety which abound in life. And, oh! would all such but coolly consider what a brutal part they are acting towards those whom the ties of nature and affection have so intimately linked together, that they should be so anxious as they are to see them *labouring for the meat that perisheth*, and not bestow a thought or concern how they may obtain *that bread which endureth to everlasting life*.

Reader! art thou a parent, a father, a master? Awake to the duties of these high characters! Consider the souls of thy household as entrusted in some sort to thee, and suffer not *those souls to perish* through thy neglect for whom Christ died. How agonizing will be the interview between such cruel and irreligious
parents

parents and their unhappy children at the last day ! What dreadful reproaches ! How painful the accusations which the children will throw upon them ! And with what a piercing bitterness will the sound of their cries enter into their ears ; And let it be observed, that these matters will be in an increased proportion of evil between those tender relations, where the parent hath attended to every thing in this life for his child's interest but the *one thing needful*. The more solicitous and provident he hath proved, as the father and the friend, in the concerns of this world's good, the more bitter will be the reflection, in not having regarded the important concerns of a better. Let the mind conceive, if possible, the horrors with which the prayerless father will hear the accusation from the son or daughter of his own bosom, in terms perhaps like these : Ah ! cruel parent ! was this the seeming tenderness with which you studied my happiness in yonder world, in contriving every amusement and pleasure for my enjoyment, while leaving me ignorant of *that* in which alone true happiness is found, and for the want of which I am miserable for ever.

Reader !

Reader ! art thou a parent ? And dost thou call thyself a *tender* parent ? Wouldst thou be displeased to be accused of inattention to thy children's welfare ? Attend then to *that*, which concerns their welfare indeed ! even their eternal welfare. And know, that void of this, though thou labourest night and day for their earthly comfort, and though thou leavest behind thee the richest worldly possessions to thy children, and to thy children's children, yet art thou infinitely worse, and more foolish than the senseless ostrich of the wilderness, who *leaveth her eggs in the dust*, and is regardless of every attention to her young. Oh ! may the eye that reads this, if he stands in either of the relative situations of the head of a family, and is among the unhappy characters who neglect household devotion, be awakened to an instant discharge of it ; and may the prime mover and hearer of all prayer be graciously pleased to pour out the spirit of supplication upon him from on high.

But perhaps thou art one of those who art so far awakened as to feel an anxiety for thy own *personal* salvation, and art attending upon the means of grace thyself, but hath not set up religion in thine house.

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This is one of those unaccountable problems which excites the wonder of men and angels. What a contradiction is such a man's life to himself. Anxious to discharge *one* duty, and neglectful of all the rest. In *secret* serving God, but ashamed to do it *openly*. It would be a most unnecessary service to use any argument upon this point. A moment's reflection is enough to convince every man of this complexion both of his iniquity and his danger. Awake, awake therefore from this delusion, and let not the *fear of man* any longer *bring a snare*. Attend only to that cutting expostulation of God by the Prophet, which is enough to drive out all lesser fears: *Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man which shall be as grass, and forgetteth the lord thy maker?* May this awful consideration be so accompanied with divine grace as to operate to the purpose intended!

I fear the five minutes I requested is nearly, if not quite exhausted, and therefore, Reader, I take my leave. Farewell! Let not a *stranger*, and perhaps unknown, feel this concern for thy eternal salvation, and thou remain uninterested.

interested. Add but thy prayer to his, and God will bless the means to the end intended. And however the fashion of the world may be against this great duty (a world whose customs are declared enmity to God); however *fools make a mock of sin, and scorers delight in scorning*, let nothing intimidate thee from taking up the resolution of Joshua, and saying, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

To assist in the execution of this desirable purpose, and that none may want a proper form of devotion, here are added short prayers both for morning and evening service in a family, and also an additional help for the Lord's day. They are not given as perfect models, but merely as helps to devotion. The great principles by which the Christian religion is peculiarly distinguished, are carefully preserved in them; and though they are by no means meant to fetter the spirit of piety to those who need no form of prayer, yet it is to be hoped they will answer the purpose to those that do.—Gladly would the author throw them aside, was that blessed effect more generally manifested
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in the world, which is promised of God, when a spirit of grace shall be poured out from the Lord; and when the spirit shall so plentifully be helping our infirmities as to teach us, in our hours of devotion, what to speak; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But in the mean time we are admonished not to despise the day of small things.

Such as they are, they are humbly offered to the use of those who may stand in need of helps of this nature; and the author can only earnestly pray God that a divine blessing, like that which distinguished the fleece of Gideon, by the dew falling upon it, while all the earth around was without moisture, may be sensibly felt, by all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; from those prayerless families who live as without God in the world, and lie down and rise up like the herd of the stall, never saying where is God, our maker?

It would perhaps much conduce to the infusing a spirit of piety in a family (and especially among the younger branches of it) if a short admonition was sometimes made use of by the head of it, before the prayers

prayers were begun. Such for example as the following :

“ We are going to take upon us, who are *but dust and sinful ashes*, to speak unto the *High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity: who dwelleth in that light which no man can approach to*; and to whose mercy-seat we cannot draw nigh but through the merits and intercession of our ever blessed Redeemer: With what reverence and godly fear ought we to approach him! Let our souls be awfully impressed with becoming sentiments of the lowest humility; and let us beg of God that such a sense of his divine majesty may possess every faculty of our nature, that we may never be in danger of *drawing nigh unto him with our mouth, and honouring him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him.*

“ With every holy disposition of soul, and with a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, let us now fall upon our knees, and present our supplications at the footstool of his grace.”

Morning Prayer for a Family.

O LORD God, most high, most holy, and most gracious. The Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of our nature. The King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible; the only wise God.

We draw nigh to thee through the prevailing intercession and atoning merits of Christ. We approach thy awful presence. Lord, quicken us by thy Holy Spirit to call upon thy name. Put a word in our mouth, that the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts may be always acceptable in thy sight.

We desire to adore thy divine majesty, and to worship thee with humble reverence. Thou art infinitely wise, powerful, and gracious, far above all our highest thoughts, and above all our warmest praises. But we implore grace to present our morning sacrifice of thanksgiving, that thou hast brought us to the light of another day, and raised us from the bed of sleep in peace and safety: Praised be thy goodness, O God, for these and all other thy undeserved mercies! Let our souls praise the Lord, and all that is within us praise his holy name.

But when from considering the greatness

ness and goodness of thy nature we return to the recollection of ourselves, how utterly unworthy are we to come into thy holy presence ! Thou art in Heaven, and we upon earth. Our being is but of yesterday, and our foundation in the dust. Born in sin, and living in transgression, how have we offended from our childhood to this very hour, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.

But, Lord, take away the guilt of our sins by the atoning merits of Christ's blood. Subdue the power of our iniquities by thy Holy Spirit. Pity, O Heavenly Father, the blindness of our nature, and the corruption of our hearts. Work in us sincere repentance : It is thou only that can give us this gift, or renew a right spirit within us. Form our souls after thine image, which was lost by the sin of our first parents, and preserve us from all the dangers to which we are exposed, amidst the several enemies of our salvation.

Let thy providences be all sanctified, whether of affliction or prosperity. Let thy mercies draw us nearer to thyself, and let thy chastisements have this in-

tended effect upon our hearts, to wean us from sin, to mortify us to the world, and to keep us in a constant readiness to depart from it.

If it be thy blessed will, continue to us the mercies of health and prosperity, and give us grace in the midst of all to expect and to be ready for a change. And as in a day, or an hour, our prosperity may be turned into adversity, our health into pining sickness, and our very life into death, O merciful Lord! establish us, we pray thee, in Christ Jesus; seal us for thy faithful people; give us the earnest of thy Holy Spirit, and let holiness to the Lord be inscribed upon all we are, and all we do, or say. Lord, strengthen us this day mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man; whatever temptations we may meet with from the world, from the powers of darkness, or in ourselves, enable us to overcome; and do thou keep us by thy grace both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls.

And as we are required, so would we cheerfully testify a true and christian love and charity to the whole race of men, by remembering them in our prayers. O thou almighty maker of the spirits
of

of all flesh, look down and pity a lost, miserable world; send the light of thy Gospel among the dark corners of the earth, until thou hast brought all to the knowledge of the truth, and make every knee to bend to the name of Jesus! Particularly bless the saviour of righteousness in this land to which we belong. May the purity of our faith be manifested by the piety of our lives, and may we live as the redeemed of the Lord! And while we pray for the people of this land, we would yet more immediately desire a blessing on this our house and family. That thou who makest men to be of one mind in a house, would inspire all the members of it with a spirit of love and concord, and let this benefit be always produced from our prayers, that we may rise from our knees with such refreshments of grace as may manifest to each other, and to the world, that a true spirit of piety lives in our souls, by that spirit of love and unity, with which, as brethren, we dwell together.

Comfort and protect all our absent friends and benefactors. Sanctify to them their condition, whatever it may be; visit and relieve the oppressed; pity Lord, and

in thy own appointed time relieve the sick, and sanctify the afflictions of their bodies to the endless comforts of their souls : instruct the ignorant, reclaim the disobedient and them that are out of the way, and let sinners be converted unto thee. Bless our enemies, and do good to them that hate us, and bring into the bonds of Christian fellowship all that are at variance, that it may be known whose disciples we are by our love to one another.

Finally, Lord, while we thus implore a continuance of mercies, accept all that our cold hearts can offer of thankfulness for those already received ; for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of our lives : But above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept all our petitions through his prevailing name and powerful intercession, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, we desire to ascribe all praise, and glory, and honour, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

Our father which art in heaven, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
&c.

*On the Sabbath Day, to the Morning Prayer,
may be added this that follows.*

Blessed Lord, who hath graciously set apart this sacred day, which thou hast called by thine own most holy name, as a day of rest and refreshment to man, to call off his attention from those perishing objects around him, and in a more immediate manner to direct his thoughts towards thee and his future state: We praise thy merciful appointment, and acknowledge our sense of thy great goodness in granting to us a return of this holy day, for those blessed purposes. Give us grace to improve it to the everlasting comfort of our souls. Help us to commemorate afresh this day the rising of our blessed Redeemer from the grave; and may our hearts arise from the dead and unprofitable things of this world, to ascend with him in holy contemplation to that glorious place, where he sitteth at the right hand of God! Never can we sufficiently adore the bounties of thy providence, that thou hast granted to poor sinful creatures, in those regions of darkness, such a day of light and joy, whereby we have an opportunity of imitating the heavenly

venly host, while assembling in thine house of prayer, with one heart and voice to worship God, through Jesus Christ.

Banish from our souls, this holy morning, every vain thought and worldly concern, that we may begin this day with God, and go through it under an abiding sense of thy continual presence.

Praised be thy forbearance that we are alive here this day ; and, while others are tossing upon the beds of sickness, and cut off from the assembly of thy people, thou hast granted to us the favour of going with the multitude into the house of God, and uniting in the voice of prayer among such as keep holy this day ; that we have one sabbath more allotted to us upon earth to prepare for the eternal sabbaths of heaven.

Lord, impart thy grace to our souls, that this sacred trust may not be added to the many we have spent improperly. How often have we passed those holy days in a total neglect of the duty intended ! And instead of dedicating them to thine honour, have consumed them in idleness and folly : How often, even in the seemingly better application, have
we

we rushed into the courts of thy house and the place where thine honour dwelleth, without a thought or reflection of the greatness of the Being whose presence we were approaching ! And how very often, while our bodies have been present before thee, and our lips uttering words of prayer, have our souls been wandering among the things of the world, neither has God been in all our thoughts !

Pardon, gracious God, all that is past, and give us grace, that we may be no longer among the drowsy, the idle, and forgetful hearers of thy word, nor that the vanities of this life may call away our eyes or our hearts from attending to thee, the supreme object of devotion.

Go with us to thy holy temple, and may we always find thy presence in the assemblies of thy people. Let thy Holy Spirit be powerfully assisting all the ministers and stewards of thy word, throughout the world, that some souls may be gathered to Christ every sabbath, Particularly bless his ministry under whom we are placed. And as thou hast ordained that the *priest's lips should retain knowledge*, and that *the people should seek the law at their mouths*, do thou fill them, O God, with

with knowledge and sound doctrine, that they may not preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

And as the *public* ministration of thy holy word employs but a small portion of this sacred day, enable us, O Lord, to fill it wholly in *private* duties, and to be careful of applying every portion of time so precious to the best of purposes. In retirement and abstraction from the world, in prayer and self-examination, let our souls exist; not *doing our own ways*, not *finding our own pleasure*, not *speaking our own words*, and not going into those idle customs of unprofitable visits and the like, which distinguish men of this world from sincere lovers of God.

And, finally, gracious God, grant that both our *public* duties at thy temple, and our private meditations and sacred employments at home, may all serve to lead our souls to him who is the author and finisher of our faith, the Lamb who was slain and hath redeemed us unto thee by his blood, and through whom alone we seek acceptance and salvation. To whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all glory and honour, in all churches of the saints, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

EVENING



EVENING PRAYER.

GREAT and glorious lord of heaven and earth, behold thy poor creatures of the dust approaching thy divine presence, to present our evening sacrifice and thanksgiving for the mercies of the day past, and the whole of our lives, and to implore thy protection through the night. We humbly desire to call upon thee, thou almighty Lord, through the atoning merits and intercession of Jesus Christ. We adore thy great goodness manifested to us in that we yet live monuments of thy long-suffering and forbearance, and have power to call upon thy holy name. Most justly might we have been cut off from the land of the living for our manifold transgressions, had thy ways been as our ways, and thy thoughts like our thoughts; and long since have been past the power of offering any prayers to thy Divine Majesty; but thou art a God of mercy, therefore thy grace is still continued towards us. Oh that we may now find grace in thy sight! We desire, with the lowliest prostration of soul and body, to confess our manifold offences before thee, and to smite upon
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our breasts, humbly imploring that thou wouldst be merciful to us miserable sinners.

Had we only the sins and errors of the past day to answer for, yet even this day's account would make us stand condemned before thee. But our transgressions have been multiplying from our childhood to this hour. We have sinned against the clear knowledge of thy will, often in the midst of the tenderest expressions of thy mercy; against all thy inviting promises, thy awful warnings, and thy fatherly visitations; against the powerful corrections of thy Holy Spirit, and all the mercies provided for us in the blood of Christ. Lord, we are utterly unworthy to come before thee; and were it not that even a sense of our sins can only come from the blessed teachings of thy Holy Spirit, we should not have the confidence any more to pray unto God.

But when we look up through that channel of grace and mercy opened to sinners in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, we are encouraged to draw nigh, and to plead this before thee, as the means of acceptance. O sprinkle our consciences with that blood of cleansing

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ing which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel ; clothe our souls with that robe of righteousness which is found only in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ our Lord ; and let our whole hope and dependence be in him, who of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption !

Accompany thy pardoning mercy with thy purifying grace. And as our Lord Jesus Christ died for sin to condemn sin in the flesh, enable us to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness. Help us, O Lord, thou God of all power and might, to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and holiness.

O give us a new heart, and renew a right spirit within us ! Wean our souls from all the pomps and pleasures, from all the vanities and honours, and from all the enjoyments of flesh and appetite in this transitory state of things, and make us hunger and thirst after righteousness, until we wake up after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with it.

Impress us continually with that great truth, that the gaining of the whole
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world would be a miserable recompence for the loss of the soul. And oh ! let that solemn account we must all, ere long, give before the judgement-seat of Christ, so influence all our thoughts, and words, and actions, that when the moment shall come, and Christ shall appear to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe, we may be able to cry out with holy rapture—Lo ! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us ; this is the Lord, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.

We humbly commit ourselves, our friends, our relations, our neighbours, and all that call upon the name of the Lord, to thy merciful protection this night. The darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day. Defend, we beseech thee, our persons, our dwellings, and our property from all danger. Refresh us with such sleep that the wearied limbs of the body may be so comforted and prepared to act with the vigour of the mind, that when the morning shall again dawn upon us, together with opening the eyes of the body to the light of a new day, we may open the eyes of the soul to the renewed
light

light of thy grace. Or, if it be thy blest-ed will that our sleep may be the sleep of death, let our souls be found among those who sleep in Jesus: And may all thy providences be sanctified with thy blessing and thy grace, that if we live, we may live to the Lord, and if we die, we may die to the Lord, so that living or dying we may be the Lord's!

After the many supplications we have presumed to make for the mercies we want, let a sense of the many we enjoy make us ever grateful for those already received. We bow with thankfulness for the mercies of ease and health which thou hast been pleased to give us, for the comforts of the day past, and for the many providences bestowed upon us through life; but above all these mercies, which, great and undeserved as they are, are yet but temporal; still more devout thanksgiving we wish to express for those which are eternal; for all the wonders of thy grace; that such a redemption is provided for fallen man, in the death of the Son of God: And oh the abundant goodness manifested to our souls! that while so many millions are born, and live, and die in ignorance of

this unspeakable gift of Heaven, thou hast revealed unto us this knowledge in the face of Jesus Christ.

Accept all that poor sinful creatures of the dust can offer of acknowledgement, and let our prayers, both of supplication and thanksgiving, come up before the throne of thy grace, through the sole merits and intercession of Jesus Christ.

Our father, &c.

The Lord bless us and keep us ; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR THE LORD's DAY.

EVER blessed and gracious God, praised be thy goodness that thou hast fed thy unworthy creatures with that bread of life which came down from Heaven, and of which whoever eateth shall never hunger. Surrounded as thou art with all the heavenly host of innumerable angels in thy courts above, yet have the doors of thine house below been opened this day, and sinners invited to enter in, to imitate
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the same delightful employment of praising thee through Jesus Christ.

Lord, we bless thee for every portion of power or ability which thou hast imparted, by which we have been enabled to hear thy word, and to have our souls quickened to any devotion. All the sincere breathings of our souls toward thee must come from thy mercy ; it is thou that must first put into our hearts good desires, and it is thou only that canst bring the same to good effect. We adore the riches of thy grace if we have been enabled to spend this holy day in any manner profitable to ourselves, or to the promotion of thy glory and honour: If we have been more convinced this day of the great evil of sin, and the sad corruption of our nature ; if we have seen it represented in stronger colours, and every self-exalting thought has been brought down to the ground, and we have been led to behold with increased faith that Lamb of God, which alone taketh away the sins of the world.

Carry on the good work, Lord, we beseech thee, continually in our souls, and though the day be almost ended, let not the work of it be lost.—Let thy Holy

Spirit constantly bring to our remembrance the sacred instruction which we have heard in thy house; and as far as the ministers have spoken agreeably to thy word, let our souls retain and improve it. Let the truths of thy holy word be our continual study and delight; give us grace to meditate on them both day and night; both when we lie down, and when we rise up. Suffer not the enemies of our salvation, the world, the flesh, or the devil, to take them out of our minds; neither let the concerns of this life, the lusts of the flesh, or the suggestions of Satan, render them useless and unprofitable; but, like good seed sown in good ground, let them spring up and flourish under the dew of thy blessing.

Pardon, Lord, the imperfections and weaknesses of this day, the dullness of our hearts under all the quickening ordinances of thy grace, and the wanderings of our mind among the vanities of life, even in the place where thine honour dwelleth. Oh! when shall we come to join that holy assembly above, where not a single being feels an absent affection in all the innumerable multitude!

Let the serious impression this day wrought

wrought upon our souls be never effaced, and oh! may thy grace increase them more and more! May we return to the world like new beings, fortified with the love of God, and wearing the armour of our salvation; and may every returning Sabbath with it increase the blessings of thy holy Spirit.

O may the name of Jesus have been glorified this day far and near, and may many have been brought to bend their knee to his most holy name, and have felt the power of Christ in their hearts! Hasten the time, Lord, which thou hast promised concerning thy church, when the fulness of the gentiles shall be completed, and all Israel shall be saved; when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the hills, and the whole earth be filled with the glory of the Lord.

May thy praise and thy love, thy power, thy glory, and righteousness of thy kingdom, be most in our thoughts; and we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, till we come to our future and eternal state, to join the Society of pure worshippers in an everlasting Sabbath, where we shall no longer need the use of
means,

means, but receive the end of our faith even the salvation of our souls; where we shall no longer serve God as at a distance, but see him face to face, and for ever sing praises to God and the Lamb!

To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour and glory, now and for evermore.

Our father, &c.

The Lord bless, &c.

FRAGMENT.

AS it is very possible that this little work may fall into the hands of a *pious*, as well as a *prayerless* reader; in order that the perusal of it may not be altogether unprofitable to one of this complexion also, the author would beg to subjoin an observation on the great subject of prayer, which he is led to believe is but too generally overlooked and forgotten, even by devout persons in the exercise of this important duty. The circumstance to which he alludes, is the neglect of uniting *watchfulness* with prayer: Or, in other

other words, *first* waiting the favourable moment in seasons of devotion for making our requests known unto God; and then attending upon the Lord in humility of heart and watchfulness *after* prayer for the fulfilment of God's gracious promises.

It was not certainly without a special relation to these points, that the great Redeemer so earnestly commanded his disciples to *watch and pray*. And though indeed this precept was given upon a particular occasion, yet that our blessed Lord did not intend it in any confined sense, is evident from the connection which the Apostle Paul makes of both duties, when enjoining the *Colossians to continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*. From whence it should seem very plain, that a truly pious soul is to watch *before* prayer, until a *spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon him from the Lord*; by which alone his devotions can ascend, through the Redeemer's name, a grateful offering before God; and *after* prayer, like the Prophet, he is *to get upon the watch-tower*, to see what the Lord will say in answer to his petition. For without the *one* a man will be in danger of praying unassisted by
 grace,

grace, and follow the indiscretion of those whom Jesus reprov'd *in knowing not what they asked*; and without the *other* it is impossible to know whether the mercies implored are granted or not. It was probably with an eye to this, the Prophet Isaiah was instructed to deliver that precept: *Keep silence before me, O Islands, and let the people renew their strength. Let them come near, then let them speak.*

This great principle of watchfulness in devotion, which as a duty hath the sanction both of Christ and his Apostle in the appointment of it, and, in respect of usefulness and importance, carries with its own recommendation; is what the author of this little tract wishes to place in that point of view as may best engage the observation, and induce the practice of every pious reader. And under both considerations it is so self-evident and essential to the very spirit of piety, that it is only astonishing how it should ever escape the notice, or not attract the warmest regard to every devout mind.

We pray God, either for general mercies or for particular blessings, and such as we stand in need of; and the very application supposes that we earnestly desire

fire (if consistent with the divine will) to obtain what we ask.—But how strange is it then, that as soon as we have finished our devotions, and made known our requests unto God, we arise from our knees, seemingly as regardless of the event, and unwatchful of the divine pleasure, concerning the object of our requests, as though we had not implored and were unconcerned to obtain. Doth such a conduct correspond with the idea of prayer? Is it thus that we ask from one another in the circumstances of common life, a supply to our several necessities? Look at the poorest beggar which ever haunted the rich man's gate for charity! Suppose when he knocks at the door, and as soon as it is opened to him, and he hath made known his request, he should hasten away without waiting for an answer; what should we think of the absurdity of such conduct? and how should we condemn the inconsistency of his behaviour?—Could the beggar in this case expect, or would he be capable of receiving the alms he implored? And yet in fact does not every man the same, who knocks at the gate of heaven, and implores mercy at the throne of grace, but waits not the event

of his application? Surely we are all beggars in this sense before God, and are infinitely more excusable than him who asks for alms of his fellow creatures upon earth, if we use less importunity in our petitions, or are tired of waiting in our prayers, when we draw nigh that Great Father of mercies, who is always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and wont to give more than either we desire or deserve.

Indeed, as a further proof of the importance of this great duty of *watchfulness*, and as an additional motive to the performance of it, may it not be said that the blessings we ask from God are, in a certain measure, suspended upon our expectation and faith in receiving them. For when the great Redeemer promised that *if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, and if we knock at the gate of mercy it shall be opened*, he connects with it the necessity of depending upon God, to receive the blessings we implore; and adds, that all things whatsoever we ask *believing* we shall receive. So that from hence we are taught that the reception of the mercies we implore do not depend so much upon the divine disposition to give,

as in the frame of our mind for receiving. *All things* (as Christ elsewhere observes) *are possible to him that believeth.* To the same purport is the direction of his apostle John. *This is the confidence* (says he) *that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.* And yet, if possible, more expresse to the point is the apostle James. He is speaking indeed of one particular gift of God, but which may, by a parity of reasoning, be applied to all. *If any of you* (says he) *lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is, like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of God.* From all which nothing can be more clear and evident, than that the great duty of *watchfulness*, or humble waiting upon the Lord, forms a very considerable part in the faithful discharge of devotion. And if we hope to receive any thing from God, the blessings and mercies we ask for through grace must be looked for in watchfulness.

It ought not to be omitted also, as a conclusive argument in favour of the duty recommended, that it is impossible to pay the Lord with a thankful heart, for the innumerable mercies he is unremittingly bestowing upon mankind, or bless him for his promises when fulfilled, but in the exercise of ~~it~~. By virtue of the divine promises it is that we are encouraged to make application to heaven with the confidence of success. And as by the promises the Lord graciously condescends to become a debtor (if the expression be warrantable) to his creatures, it certainly is an act of justice, as well as duty, to *watch* and observe, when at any time these promises are fulfilled, in order that a proper acknowledgement may be made accordingly.

Can we in fact ever make a suitable return without it? Ought not God to be as much regarded when completing *his* gracious promises, as the obligation between man and man when fulfilled, is confessed and allowed? And shall this bountiful hand be for ever stretched forth in performing acts of this nature agreeable to his divine promises, and yet be for ever hidden from our inattentive view unobserved and unacknowledged? Surely

it must be the duty, and it ought to be the highest comfort to every just and grateful mind, in those who are daily and hourly petitioning at the throne of grace, to watch also in their prayers by way of making daily and hourly acknowledgements for mercies received. And it is a conduct so truly right and becoming, that, like all others, where duty and advantage are blended together, it brings with it its own reward. And it is a maxim of unquestionable truth never to be forgotten, that he who thus watches Providence, will never want a providence to watch him.

It will be a matter of real joy to the heart of the author of this fragment, if any thing here said shall, under the divine blessing, serve to instruct any gracious soul in the great duty of watchfulness in prayer, and lead him more closely to the practice of it.—Reader! how art thou affected with these things; and what is thy conduct concerning this duty? Bring home the observations here offered thee to thine own experience, and may he who is the giver of prayer enable thee *to continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

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